



WILD Kids



4-6

Published by the Arizona Game and Fish Department - Education Branch and the Heritage Fund

Number 17

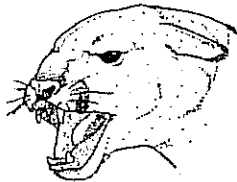
Too Close For Comfort

All animals need food, water, shelter, and **space**. Space is the place where an animal lives. Space is very important to wild animals because this is where they find their food, water, and shelter, and where they raise their young. Wild animals

may try to protect their space from other animals or people. When their space is threatened, wild animals usually fight or flee (run away). But if you get too close, some animals may give you a signal that means "back off, you're too close!"

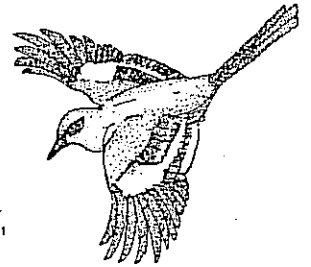
Growl, Snarl, Snort

Some animals may growl or snarl if you get too close. They curl back their lips, show their teeth, and make a threatening noise. If an animal makes this sound, you'd better back off!



Dive Bomb

The mockingbird is small but very brave. If you get too close to its nest, it may swoop down at your head. The message it's giving you is "stay away from my nest."



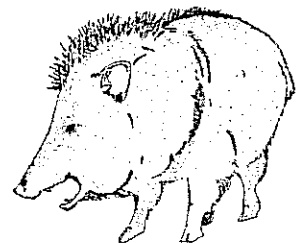
Ears Back, Nostrils Flared

When a deer or elk feels threatened it will lay its ears back flat, flare its nostrils, and roll its eyes. It may also make a hissing sound and stand up on its hind legs, kicking its front legs. This means "get out of my space!"



Raised Hackles

Javelina raise their hackles when they feel threatened. They may also make a clacking sound by snapping their teeth together. When a javelina bristles up and clacks its teeth, it's warning you to "stay away!"



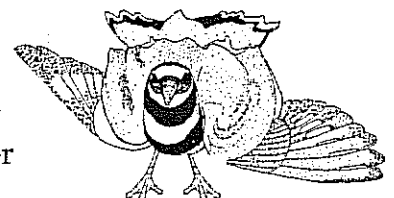
Warning Call!

Prairie dogs send out a warning call if you get too close. They stand up on their hind legs and make a chirping or barking sound. This alerts other prairie dogs that there may be danger nearby.



Hey, Look At Me!

If you get too close to a killdeer it may flutter about, acting like it has a broken wing. By drawing attention away from its nest, the killdeer is protecting its eggs.



I. How close is "*too close*" to a mountain lion?

1. Find a parking lot or large open area.
2. Draw or scratch an X on the ground to mark the location of a mountain lion.
3. Now begin walking away from the X.
4. When you decide you have walked far enough to put a safe distance between yourself and the mountain lion (X), draw an O.
5. Use a tape measure to measure the distance. Do you think this is "too close for comfort," or a safe distance from a mountain lion?

Try the same thing again for each of the animals listed below.

1. What is a safe distance from each animal?
2. How do you think each animal would act if you approached "too close?"
3. How would you feel if you approached "too close" to each animal? What would you do?

Bear

Skunk

Raccoon

Cottontail

Great Horned Owl

Deer

Rattlesnake

Roadrunner

4. Just for fun, try acting how you think some of the animals above would act if you were "too close for comfort."

II. People need personal space too.

Did you know that people need space too? If you stand too close to another person, they may feel uncomfortable. How can you tell? Here are some things a person might do if you stand too close:

- Look down or look away
- Shuffle their feet
- Make a face
- Lean back
- Wring their hands or fidget
- Move away to make more distance

Try This:

1. Stand 6 inches away from a friend and have a conversation with them. Do you think your friend is uncomfortable? How can you tell? Are you uncomfortable? How do you know?
2. Move away so there is 1 foot of distance between yourself and your friend. How does it feel? Is this more comfortable?
3. Keep moving away until you feel comfortable. Was the distance the same for both you and your friend? Did one of you need more distance in order to feel comfortable?
4. Try this again with your mom or dad. Do you think a comfortable distance would be greater or less than that for your friend?
5. What if you were talking to someone you had just met? What do you think a comfortable distance would be?

Remember: Never touch a wild animal. All wild animals will bite to defend themselves.